

ACCREDITED PRACTITIONER REGISTER (“REGISTER”) ADVISORY BOARD (“BOARD”)

Summary of a meeting of the Advisory Board held online via MS Teams

12th December 2024 at 19:00.

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees. She confirmed that automatic transcription was agreeable to all present. This was confirmed by all.

1. Update on activity with the Professional Standards Authority accreditation team

a. Notification of Change

The Register’s notification of change regarding previously reported “additional roles” has now been reviewed fully reviewed by the PSA. There are three main conditions, two of which relate to engagement with HCPC and ensuring prior membership thereof for those seeking “Occupational Therapy” related titles, the third covers need to extend risk matrix to reflect the risks involved in the delivering Horticultural therapy.

The changes have also generated a large amount of related procedural and information updates to reflect the circumstances of the new practices being added.

The aim is to minimise the risk of uncertainties at the forthcoming panel review and as such work is underway to pre-submit proposed updates to public information and direction. As such proposed changes to application and website information is being prepared for the PSA.

It was also advised of suggestions that had been received about ethical treatment of service users. A proposed outline has been provided.

b. Professional Standards Authority conference and Review of Standards

The meeting was updated on the recent accredited registers’ conference.

The main topic of that conference was engagement and discussion around the proposed review of standards that is to be undertaken. That review is covering alignment between regulated and accredited standards; more transparency in the process; consideration of organisational culture and leadership (regulators); strengthening of criminal checking and looking new criteria for assessment of new registers.

An important outcome of that meeting was the suggestion that PSA should a investigate an AI tool that could search all registers. Such that the public need only to visit one place to find an accredited practitioner.

The Register will provide a response to the PSA online consultation questionnaire.

2. Update on Professional Conduct Review Committee

There was nothing to update at this time. Updates will provided to the next board.

3. Update on Education and Training Committee

It was advised that a new page has been created on the website that now includes ALL qualifications recognised by the Register (a default of Ofqual, level 4 or greater). An additional new Therapeutic Riding qualification has now been added.

At this time there are no Ofqual recognised qualifications in Horticultural Therapy and 1 in Animal Assisted work (this will be added to the website once new roles have been approved). Regarding Horticultural Therapy the UK National Career Service recommended route to practice is for an appropriate 1st degree and then an appropriate additional horticultural-therapy qualification (unregulated).

There are additional actions arising from the Notification of Change outlined above, most notably seeking appropriate expertise be engaged on the Standards of Education committee.

4. Update on application and registration

Renewals – the renewal process has now been completed, the register membership is at 32.

All logos have been updated, and registrants will now be provided with these and an update of the Athena Brand Protection Policy.

Application and registration – there is only one current application going through. There have been a number of enquiries since year end, information has been provided in all cases, though the application has not proceeded.

5. Update from Accredited Register Collaborative (ARC)

The meeting was updated on key discussions from the most recent ARC meeting.

Terms of reference and regularity of meetings – ToR to updated, and to merged with complaints handling discussions in the future (one hour before) and meetings going forward to be quarterly. The autumn meet is likely to be face-to-face, venues to be confirmed.

Data sharing agreement – a new sharing agreement has been proposed to enable registers to share more detailed information around the background of upheld complaints. It was noted that Athena is in agreement to this but awaiting information on the actual “agreement” process. JG has received complaints notification from UKSBA and will share this with the board.

ARC combined response to PSA review of standards – this was discussed but ultimately did not proceed

Update from PSA – OA joined the meeting to provide an update from the PSA. The two main topics were the above-mentioned standards review and the recognised scale of work that the accreditation team is currently trying to manage through 2025-2026. There is a general feeling that some timelines are going to be extended.

It was agreed that the Chair should be offered invites to future ARC meetings.

6. Promotional activity since last meeting and proposed activity

Information continues to be fed regularly through social media channels.

The Register was represented at the National Equine Forum.

The Register is speaking events at the Equine Culture in Transition conference in Manchester (June) and the IAHAIO conference in Amsterdam (August). They will also be in attendance at the British Horse Council (June).

It was suggested that more registrant bios be provided on the Register’s social media pages. It was resolved that this will be done.

Other registrant benefitting activities were discussed and will be considered, this includes running a poll of members to find out what they might wish to see provided, and the potential of a Register conference.

It was also suggested that a short course be put together to cover the needs and requirements around the supporting processes and procedures for joining the register.

7. Risk matrix and Conflicts of Interest register

It was confirmed that these documents had been seen and agreed by the Board since the last session.

There will be additions to the Risk matrix once the new roles are approved in line with considerations in respect of specific horticultural risks. These additions have already been drafted and will be submitted to the PSA in advance of the upcoming panel.

8. Further recruitment to the Advisory Board, and other committees

It was confirmed that Ms Adebowale-Jones would be replaced from the next board meeting. All members had been party to that decision.

Ms Collins has also given notice but will remain as a member of the committee until replacement found. One Equine will be approached with a view to specifically seeking a NI representative. An appropriate role description is being drafted.

9. Any other business

There was no “other business”

10. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is June 10th.